

of zoölogy, and its adherents include some eminent, and even "educated" naturalists abroad. Neither is it evident that its "baneful teachings" and "advocacy of illiteracy" have had, to any perceptible degree, any demoralizing influence upon the rising generation of naturalists, or perceptibly deteriorated the quality of their spelling when it has fallen to their lot to coin new names for the designation of newly discovered genera and species.

Because the acceptance of Canon XL is not universal among naturalists is no reason for its elimination from the Code; the progress it has made and the good that has already resulted from it is rather something for which we should be grateful. It is of course not compulsory, as no such rule can be arbitrarily enforced; nor can Mr. Elliot ever expect that any rule for even such a simple matter as the transliteration of Greek and other names into Latin, to say nothing of the construction of names according to undeviating methods, will ever be in universal use. It is even "Utopian" to expect all good spellers to spell alike. Therefore we may well rest content to tolerate in our Check-List a few malformations like *Leptotila* and *Pediocates*, and even such an inept name as *cafer* for an American bird, than to open wide the door to the vacillating sway of the horrified emender.

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## DESCRIPTION OF A NEW NORTH AMERICAN THRUSH.

BY HARRY C. OBERHOLSER.

THE OLIVE-BACKED THRUSHES inhabiting the Rocky Mountain region of the United States prove to be subspecifically separable from the eastern race, to which they have heretofore been referred. The name *swainsonii* has undoubted application to the form from eastern North America, since Cabanis states<sup>1</sup> the habitat of the

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<sup>1</sup> Tschudi's Fauna Péruana, 1845-6, 190.

bird named by him to be northeastern North America, casually Peru, and furthermore evidently describes a specimen taken by himself during October, in New Jersey, which place may consequently be taken as the type locality. The *Turdus minimus* of Lafresnaye,<sup>1</sup> if belonging here at all, probably refers to the eastern race, though its status cannot be determined with certainty. Swainson and Richardson's description of their *Merula wilsonii*<sup>2</sup> probably belongs also to the eastern form, though even were such not the case the name would still be unavailable, being merely a misidentification of their bird with the *Turdus wilsonii* of Bonaparte (= *fuscescens* of Stephens). All other synonyms apply unequivocally to the eastern race, and the bird from the Rocky Mountain region being thus without a name, may be called

***Hylocichla*<sup>3</sup> *ustulata almæ*, subsp. nov. ALMA'S THRUSH.**

CHARS. SUBSP.—*Hylocichla H. u. swainsonii* *persimilis*, sed *notaeo hypochondriisque canescentioribus*.

*Geographic Distribution*.—Rocky Mountain region of the United States, west to Utah and eastern Nevada; in winter south to Mexico, and east, sporadically, to Indiana.

*Description*.—*Type*, male adult, No. 159053, U. S. National Museum, Biological Survey Collection; East Humboldt Mts, opposite Franklin Lake, Nevada, June 24, 1898; H. C. Oberholser. Upper parts hair brown, with a slight tinge of greenish; just a shade darker and browner on forehead and crown; tail fuscous, the central feathers and external webs of all the rest identical in color with the back; wings fuscous, the lesser and median coverts, with outer edgings of all the other feathers, like the upper surface of the body; basal portion of inner webs of secondaries and innermost primaries buffy. Lores, eye-ring, cheeks, jugulum and sides of neck buff, the lores, cheeks and auriculars much mixed with brownish, the jugulum, sides of neck, and sides of throat with more or less triangular spots of dark brown; a dark brown sub-malar streak; chin and middle of throat buffy white, almost immaculate; remainder of lower parts white, the sides and flanks brownish gray, the breast spotted with same color; under wing-coverts fuscous, edged with buff. Wing, 96 mm.; tail, 74 mm.; exposed culmen, 11.5 mm.; tarsus, 28 mm.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Zool., XI, 1848, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Fauna Boreali-Americana, II, 1831, 182.

<sup>3</sup> *Hylocichla* seems to be a perfectly good genus. The long tarsi, and broader, more depressed bill distinguish it sufficiently from *Turdus*, which thus becomes restricted to the Old World.

*Young in first plumage, sex unknown, No. 136318, U. S. Nat. Mus., Biological Survey Collection; Thompson Falls, Montana, Aug. 1, 1895; V. Bailey. Above greenish olive, most of the feathers, except on the lower back and rump, with shaft markings of buffy, these smallest on the head; upper tail-coverts broadly tipped with ochraceous; tail and wings fuscous, with edgings of greenish olive, the median coverts with shaft spots of buffy; sides of head buffy mixed with brownish; throat and jugulum pale buff, heavily marked with blackish; rest of lower surface dull white, with transverse markings of dark brown, these larger and darker anteriorly, the sides and flanks washed with brownish.*

The present race differs from the eastern *Hylocichla ustulata swainsonii* in the more grayish, less olivaceous color of the upper surface, this being usually most noticeable on the rump and upper tail-coverts. The sides and flanks also average more grayish. No apparent difference in size exists. No comparison with *H. ustulata* proper is necessary, for *Hylocichla u. almæ*, although geographically intermediate, is even less closely allied to *ustulata* than is *swainsonii*.

Olive-backed Thrushes from western British America and the interior of Alaska, while not perfectly typical, are nearer *swainsonii* than to *almæ*. Montana, Colorado and Texas have both forms during migration, as the specimens at hand attest. Two examples collected by Mr. E. W. Nelson on the Tres Marias Islands, western Mexico, are typical *almæ*; but this form has not been traced farther south than the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, unless an intermediate specimen from Costa Rica be considered sufficient evidence. Two birds from Vincennes, Indiana, with one other from Wheatland, in the same State, apparently must be referred to *almæ*, for they are absolutely indistinguishable from western examples.

Young birds of *H. u. almæ* appear to be usually more greenish olive than those of *swainsonii*, though this is not diagnostic.

Alma's Thrush is a common bird in eastern Nevada, where it inhabits the growth of trees and bushes that fringes the mountain streams. In the Monitor and East Humboldt Mountains, it is apparently the most numerous species of the family.

The following list of localities from which specimens have been examined will give a fair idea of its range, breeding birds being indicated by an asterisk :

Montana.— Flathead Lake \* ; Mystic Lake \* ; Dry Creek \* ; Thompson Falls \* ; Fort Custer.

Colorado.— Clear Creek \* ; Twin Lakes \* ; Denver ; Colorado Springs.

South Dakota.— Hill City.

Wyoming.— Fort Laramie ; Fort Bridger.\*

Utah.— Parley's Park.\*

Nevada.— Mountain City \* ; East Humboldt Mts.\*

Texas.— San Antonio.

Indiana.— Vincennes ; Wheatland.

Mexico.— Maria Madre, Tres Marias Islands ; Japana, Oaxaca.

The writer is indebted to Dr. C. Hart Merriam for use of the collection of the Biological Survey, and to Mr. Robert Ridgway for access to National Museum material.

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## THE SUMMER BIRDS OF SAN MIGUEL COUNTY, NEW MEXICO.

BY WALTON I. MITCHELL.

THE territory covered by this article includes the cities of Las Vegas and East Las Vegas and numerous trips all over the county, in the mountains, far from civilization. The altitude of the country varies from 6,000 to 12,000 feet, and the climatology in the summer months is very similar to that of the Pacific Coast region, the days being warm but not close, the nights cool. The rainy season begins the first of June, lasting through July into August, the rain coming about eleven A. M. and clearing up about one P. M., the remainder of the day being clear and bright, as a rule. The county is watered by the Gallinos and Pecos Rivers and numerous other small streams, none large enough to be called 'creeks' in the East.

The vegetation consists mostly of pine and spruce and scrub oak, also greasewood, cactus, and quaking aspens and cottonwoods in a few localities. Migration is completed by the 15th of May, most summer residents arriving between April 10 and May 1.